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Report of the Chairmen of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination on the twenty-fourth series of Joint Meetings of the two Committees

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) held the twenty-fourth series of Joint Meetings at United Nations Headquarters from 16 to 18 October 1989, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, Chairman of ACC, and Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon), Chairman of CPC.

2. By resolution 1988/64 of 27 July 1988, the Economic and Social Council decided that in future, the Joint Meetings should be held in New York in conjunction with the autumn session of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, in order to facilitate the participation of the members of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at a high level as well as the participation of the executive heads of the specialized agencies and United Nations programmes and that the duration of the Meetings should be sufficient to allow for an adequate exchange of views among participants.

3. To further improve the preparatory process, informal meetings were held prior to the Joint Meetings at the senior working level for a preliminary exchange of views and to focus the formal dialogue between members of the two Committees through the identification of specific talking points. The talking points identified in connection with the items on the agenda for the twenty-fourth series of Joint Meetings were as follows:

(a) Drug abuse control:

(i) Readiness of the United Nations system to meet the challenges on the question of drug abuse control with special emphasis on co-ordination in the field of information and administrative structure:

a. Effective implementation of relevant decisions adopted by the United Nations in the field of drug abuse control and illicit trafficking;

b. Guidelines for action on different aspects of the problem, namely, supply, demand and trafficking; prevention and treatment of addiction;

c. Existing arrangements;

d. New arrangements to meet urgent needs;

(ii) Question of resources: priority setting, allocation, management, amount of existing funds and additional funds required;

(b) International development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade:

(i) Common grounds for action: general assessment and orientation:

a. Past experience of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade; evaluating the results: accomplishments and obstacles;

b. Future challenges: the international development strategy as an effective instrument to invigorate growth and development of developing countries: adjusting the work of the United Nations agencies to a dynamic international economic environment and new objectives of the international development strategy, for the development of the developing countries;

(ii) The international development strategy as an effective instrument for co-ordination:

a. Planning:

i. Integration of various sectoral, intersectoral and regional objectives into the new international development strategy;

ii. Incorporation of the goals and objectives of the international development strategy in the planning process of the agencies, inter alia, by setting concrete operational activities directed towards the achievement of these goals;

b. Mechanisms for review, co-ordination and implementation:

i. Adequate mechanisms at global and regional levels;

ii. Cost-effectiveness, to clarify options available for decision-making;

iii. Existing and new arrangements;

(iii) Questions of resources;

(c) Enhancing the effectiveness of the Joint Meetings:

(i) Reference to the preparatory process;

(ii) Documentation, publicity;

(iii) Duration, date;

(iv) Implementation of conclusions and recommendations.

4. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1988/64, the Joint Meetings adopted conclusions and recommendations, which are set out in section III below.

I. OPENING STATEMENTS

A. Statement by the Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination

International development strategy

5. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of ACC, said that the international development strategy was conceived as a comprehensive document to promote international co-operation for development and that it constituted an important framework not only for co-ordination among Governments, but also for closer collaboration within the United Nations system. It should also provide a clear benchmark against which to monitor and evaluate national and international efforts.

6. He pointed out that it was necessary to ensure that the new strategy was realistic, that it reflected genuine commitment by Member States and the international community, and that it provided clear guidelines that recorded collective aspirations and hopes.

7. The Secretary-General noted that the pace of change had accelerated and continued to do so. The world economy was more interdependent, as was clearly evident from the global financial markets and from rapidly advancing communications technology; human development and adaptability had become key factors in survival and prosperity; the information revolution had opened up new vistas.

8. He cautioned that while the world had become a more peaceful place, the magnitude of the problems had grown - population growth, the financial and debt crises, decline of per capita incomes, environmental concerns, social problems. If the new international development strategy was to make a difference, international co-operation for development should be intensified and national efforts strengthened.

9. With regard to the question of resources necessary to address all those problems, the Secretary-General said that the United Nations system should not hesitate to tell Member States what the "bottom line" would be in order for developing countries to resume healthy growth and development.

10. In conclusion, he said that improved co-ordination was necessary at all levels - at the national level, between bilateral and multilateral agencies, decisions taken by Member States at international forums and within the United Nations system - in order to meet the challenges ahead.

Drug abuse control

11. The Secretary-General noted that consideration of drug abuse control was particularly appropriate and timely, in view of the recent events in Colombia, the reactions of the international community, and the initiatives of Member States, which included a proposal for a special session of the General Assembly on that important issue.

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12. He said that the United Nations had long been recognized as the natural forum in which to mobilize the international co-operation essential for tackling the critical global problem of drug abuse, and that the United Nations system had a key responsibility to ensure the effective implementation of countermeasures.

13. The Secretary-General noted that during the past two and a half years there had been a major intensification of the system's efforts, notably at the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in 1987 and the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in 1988.

14. As a result of these major conferences and the heightened concern about drugs, Member States had made a number of new demands on the United Nations system. The need for effective co-ordination of United Nations activities in drug abuse control was greater than ever.

15. The responsibility for co-ordinating the programmes within the United Nations rested with the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna. Co-ordination within the United Nations system as a whole was effected through the inter-agency meetings convened within the framework of ACC. ACC had had a full debate on the subject at its spring session and proposed the preparation of a system-wide programme to meet the requirements of the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control adopted at the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

16. The Secretary-General said that ACC placed particular emphasis on the need to give greater attention to the prevention and reduction of the demand for narcotic drugs, especially the development of effective techniques and the interchange of experience; ACC had concluded that in order to carry out fully the additional responsibilities placed upon the United Nations and other organizations of the system, additional financial resources had to be made available by Member States, both in their national budgets and in the budgets of the relevant components of the United Nations system. He urged all members of CPC to impress upon Governments the fact that much greater support must be given to the efforts of the United Nations system to complement those national measures.

17. The Secretary-General was encouraged that Member States were in many cases putting into effect vigorous new national measures and had made a clear commitment to support the United Nations system in its efforts to undertake the tasks assigned to its organizations; but there was clearly a need for intensified endeavours at national, regional and global levels and for the effective harnessing of all possible resources: financial, technical and human.

18. The drug abuse control activities of the United Nations system were expected to play a central role in the far-reaching effort of the international community. The Secretary-General said it was vitally important for the United Nations, and for all the peoples of the world, that those endeavours succeed.

B. Statement by the Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination

International development strategy

19. The Chairman of CPC said that the preparation of the new international development strategy was very timely at the initial phase of active reflection, between the end of the current decade and the beginning of the next.

20. He was of the opinion that it was essential, first of all, to affirm the place of the strategy among the various co-ordination instruments of the United Nations. At the top of the hierarchy of instruments was the Charter, which was an instrument with vision; there followed the basic instruments for action - the plans and programmes of action of various decades, and such management instruments as the medium-term plan, programme budgets, monitoring and evaluation. The international development strategy should be placed in the context of those instruments as one of the best instruments for co-ordination in the economic and social sectors.

21. The Chairman said that three factors were necessary for the formulation of the new international development strategy: the collective will and resolve to provide the impetus for launching the new strategy; a debate on the complex problems and priorities to provide the framework for a common global approach; and finally the elaboration of the new strategy, taking into account the substantive debates held elsewhere.

Drug abuse control

22. The Chairman emphasized the importance of the Joint Meetings as a unique forum for the exchange of views at a high level between representatives of Member States and executive heads of the agencies of the United Nations system.

23. He said that the international community was increasingly becoming aware of the gravity of drug abuse and illicit trafficking and should affirm its willingness to join forces in the war against that scourge.

24. He called upon the United Nations system to place special emphasis on programme activities related to drug abuse control in order to confront the problem in all its magnitude and maximize the system's efforts and resources. To meet the challenge, guidelines should be prepared for action to achieve a balanced and coherent approach to different aspects of the problem.

25. To ensure the effectiveness of action at the national, regional and global levels, it was necessary for Member States and organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen co-ordination. That called for a minimum of common ground for action, appropriate mechanisms, and a common willingness for action, supported by the necessary resources.

II. SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

General

26. Participants noted that while some improvements in the conduct of the Joint Meetings had been achieved, there remained the need to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of that unique instrument for co-ordinating the programmes of the United Nations system.

27. The change in venue and timing of the twenty-fourth series of Joint Meetings had been called for by the Economic and Social Council in order to facilitate the participation of members of CPC at a high level and the executive heads of the organizations members of ACC. The view was expressed that the Joint Meetings had initiated the revitalization of a high-level dialogue between Member States and organizations of the system, which needed to be strengthened.

28. Participants considered further measures for improving the functioning and effectiveness of the Joint Meetings, including informal consultations and preparatory meetings prior to the Joint Meetings and the possibility of reporting to the General Assembly at its current session, in addition to reporting to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1990.

29. It was also suggested that the co-ordinating role of the Secretary-General as Chairman of ACC should be enhanced. To improve the impact of the system's collective effort in resolving global problems, more active participation by the Secretary-General was envisaged in the co-ordination of activities of organizations under his general guidance.

30. Members noted the necessity for an adequate preparatory process in order to maximize the limited duration of the Joint Meetings. It was suggested that future sessions could be extended, if required by the Joint Meetings agenda.

31. During the discussion, suggestions were made for improving the format and content of the report of ACC as a useful source of information for Member States in their consideration of system-wide programmatic issues. It was suggested that in order to assist Member States monitor the use of resources and plan for the future, the ACC report could highlight developments of the preceding year, indicate problem areas requiring urgent multilateral action, and provide an overview of the allocation of regular and extrabudgetary resources.

32. It was stated that through increased co-operation and rationalization of existing resources it should be possible to focus the direction of programmes of the system, to shape its agenda and establish priorities. Such programme integration could eliminate duplication and overlap, and harmonize the work of the system. It was suggested that streamlining the activities of organizations and focusing efforts along priority lines, combined with adequate financing and more reasonable budgetary spending, would greatly contribute to the increased effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system.

33. Several representatives said that the deliberations of the Joint Meetings should focus on the co-ordination component of items of the agenda, rather than substantive issues, which were considered in other forums.

34. Monitoring the implementation of decisions of the Economic and Social Council and conclusions and recommendations of CPC pertaining to the Joint Meetings, as well as those adopted by the Joint Meetings, was considered essential to improving the functioning of future Joint Meetings.

Preparation of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade

35. The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the Preparation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade informed the Joint Meetings of the status of preparations. He pointed out that the new strategy would not be a copy of the Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade and that there was general agreement with the four major themes recommended by the Committee for Development Planning, namely, the need for accelerated growth in the world economy in the 1990s, the central place of human development and of policies to promote it, the priority of poverty alleviation and the urgency of environmental protection. He noted that a strong convergence of views had emerged on the main issues to be included in the new strategy and on the way in which they would need to be treated or structured. He said that informal consultations were continuing to be held in preparation of the forthcoming session of the Ad Hoc Committee, in January 1990.

36. Members of both Committees welcomed the positive changes in international relations which were particularly encouraging for enhancing multilateral action. It was agreed that the United Nations system should seize the opportunity of improving co-ordination and streamlining activities.

37. Members of the Committees expressed their appreciation for the background paper prepared for the discussion of the Joint Meetings and for the role the ACC Task Force on Long-term Development Objectives had played in developing an outline that reflected the concerns of the organizations of the United Nations system in relation to the preparation of the new international development strategy. Members also expressed appreciation to the Committee for Development Planning for its analysis of the threats and challenges to international development in the 1990s - notably the prospect of continued retardation and decline in Latin America and Africa - and its recommendations on the major themes for the new strategy.

38. It was generally agreed that the new strategy should articulate a common understanding of the requirements for sustained world development, and that it should be more focused and flexible in order to facilitate a more timely response to changes in the world economy. There was currently a more common approach to economic problems, a new global financial market, a more shared belief that human welfare and the global environment must be safeguarded, and the widespread agreement that human initiatives must be allowed greater scope in the shaping of economic and social change.

39. Many speakers stressed the importance of a balanced approach to the issues to be included in the new strategy and that a limited number of targets and indicators would be useful to facilitate the monitoring of the strategy.

40. It was pointed out that the new strategy should also respect the policies and programmes to which Governments had already committed themselves for meeting the sectoral goals and objectives for the 1990s. At the same time, sectoral strategies should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the new strategy. It was agreed that the contribution of the United Nations system to the preparation of the new strategy was all the more important in order to ensure that the strategy provided a coherent framework of the overall efforts of the international community.

41. Members of CPC also stressed the importance of effective co-ordination of the United Nations system for the implementation of the new strategy. Many members of CPC expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of information available to them on past successes and failures of co-ordination within the United Nations system. They were of the opinion that it was crucial to draw upon past experience to avoid in the future the difficulties that had been encountered in implementing the Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade.

42. Some members of ACC pointed out that there had in fact, been, a great deal of effective co-ordination without the formality of the ACC machinery and that while ineffective co-ordination or lack of co-ordination needed to be addressed, there should not be too much emphasis on bureaucratic mechanisms. They also pointed out that many of the difficulties had been exacerbated by inadequate resources and that it would be counter-productive if the assignment of specific tasks for implementing the new strategy were not matched by resources commensurate with the activities.

43. Some members of ACC reiterated the views expressed at the 1988 Joint Meetings on the need for effective co-ordination at the government level also so as to avoid conflicting directives to the United Nations system.

44. Some members of CPC referred again to the need for improved co-ordination of operational activities and the strengthening of the role of the United Nations resident co-ordinators in order to respond adequately and in a timely manner to national policies and priorities.

45. It was agreed that co-operation and co-ordination should not be limited to organs and organizations within the United Nations system, but should also include organizations outside the system in order to enhance the role of international co-operation. Moreover, it was pointed out that the strategy should not only be politically feasible but should also appeal to the general public since the public should be aware of the commitment of the international community to embark on a meaningful path of development.

46. Members of both Committees stressed the importance of follow-up action needed for the monitoring, review and appraisal of the new strategy.

Drug abuse control

47. Representatives of both Committees emphasized the necessity for urgent multilateral action and for the readiness of the United Nations system to take a concerted and coherent approach to the global problem of drug abuse.

48. Members expressed their appreciation of the information contained in the background paper prepared by the secretariat. However, some members of CPC suggested that information on action taken by organizations in response to mandates given by the two United Nations conferences on control of drug abuse and illicit trafficking would facilitate the deliberations of Member States on the subject.

49. Representatives stressed the need to transform the potential of the United Nations system into effective action to combat drug abuse. To that end it was suggested that Member States and the organizations concerned would benefit from a comprehensive overview of the system's activities in that field, including obstacles encountered in the past, goals and objectives for implementing intergovernmental mandates, precise data on the allocation of related resources, and the extent of co-ordination carried out in the system.

50. To meet the challenge and magnitude of the threat of drug abuse and illicit trafficking, members stressed the need for strengthening co-ordination mechanisms and for closer co-operation among the units and bodies involved in order to maximize existing resources, improve complementarity of action, and eliminate duplication and lacunae in the activities of organizations.

51. While some participants called for the mobilization of resources commensurate with the gravity and scope of the problem, others pointed out that effective action required more than additional resources, and that a well-formulated and co-ordinated system-wide programme addressing drug abuse control would attract resources.

52. It was suggested that a global programme of action to control drug abuse was required to provide the necessary guidelines for a co-ordinated multidisciplinary approach by organizations of the system. It was proposed that a high-level governmental group of experts be established to develop, in co-operation with United Nations officials, such a global programme of action, and to advise the Secretary-General and Member States on the economic and social, as well as the political, dimensions of that complex issue.

53. It was proposed that consideration should be given to the possibility of integrating the functions of the three United Nations drug control units with a view to achieving closer co-operation and greater efficiency and effectiveness. However, other participants were of the view that existing structures within the United Nations should be maintained and strengthened; in that context, concern was expressed about the adequacy of funding provided for the three drug control units in the forthcoming biennium.

54. A number of speakers stressed the importance of strengthening public information activities to enhance public awareness of United Nations involvement in

and commitment to combating the scourge of drug abuse. An information strategy should be developed for the system, based on co-ordinated inputs from appropriate organizations. It was also considered essential for organizations to improve the systematic exchange of information on related research and activities in that field, thereby benefiting from shared experience, maximizing scant resources and avoiding duplication of efforts.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. General

55. Improved co-ordination, including exchange of information, is an important means of enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness and complementarity of programmes delivered by the organizations of the United Nations system and avoiding overlap and duplication.

56. Although instruments for system-wide co-ordination exist and are used, there is scope and need for improvement, enhancement and streamlining.

57. ACC has a key and growing role in assisting Member States to carry out deliberations on substantive issues as well as on issues related to the management and co-ordination of the system.

58. The annual report of ACC should be strengthened so as to realize its potential as an effective instrument providing Member States with, inter alia, an overview of system-wide activities, plans and resource allocations. To this end, ACC is encouraged to continue improving the format and content of its report.

59. The Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC provide a unique instrument for Member States and organizations of the system to exchange views and formulate recommendations on issues of critical relevance for improved co-ordination. These meetings should take place in New York on an annual basis at such time as to maximize attendance by the executive heads of the specialized agencies and United Nations programmes and senior-level representatives of Member States and to minimize conflict with other meetings. They should be preceded by informal preparatory meetings at the working level.

60. The Joint Meetings will prove most effective if the exchange of views is conducted as a dialogue among senior representatives and if agreed conclusions and recommendations are achieved. However, there remains scope for greater participation at a high level on a sustained basis by members of both Committees. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, taking into account the views of CPC and ACC, should review the functioning of the Joint Meetings and take appropriate action.

61. The ACC secretariat should prepare a brief report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the present report for submission to the twenty-fifth series of Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC.

B. Preparation of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade

62. The international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade provides an opportunity for strengthening international co-operation for sustained growth and accelerated development of developing countries during the 1990s.

63. The United Nations system, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/182 and the relevant parts of General Assembly resolution 43/188, should continue to contribute actively and in a well co-ordinated manner to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the Preparation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and should take the strategy fully into account in their programmes and plans for the 1990s.

64. ACC should make a careful assessment of the experience gained in strengthening co-ordination within the United Nations system relating to implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, with a view to identifying measures for enhanced co-ordination and co-operation within the United Nations system during the 1990s, and should present concrete suggestions and recommendations to the Ad Hoc Committee.

65. In preparing the new international development strategy in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/182, the objective should be that it should serve, inter alia, as the basis for providing guidance for the relevant sectoral goals and objectives of the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and that it should also provide for strengthening co-ordination of their activities.

66. The executive heads of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system should bring to the attention of their respective governing bodies the relevant parts of the new international development strategy with a view to adopting policies and programmes which would facilitate implementation of the strategy.

67. In the context of the preparation of the new strategy and in order to facilitate its implementation, the co-ordination, effectiveness and coherence of operational activities of the United Nations system at the country level should be strengthened in accordance with national policies and priorities for development.

68. The organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system should contribute effectively and in a well co-ordinated manner to the review and appraisal of the new international development strategy and to the monitoring of the goals and objectives to be included in the strategy.

69. It was reaffirmed that Member States have the overall responsibility for the elaboration of the new international development strategy. Organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system would provide appropriate inputs in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/182 in order to contribute to intergovernmental deliberations.

70. While the adequacy and the extent of resources are of importance in the preparation of the new international development strategy, there is also a need for optimal utilization of existing resources. In due course, the General Assembly and other governing bodies of the United Nations system will decide on the need for additional resources, including extrabudgetary resources, in the context of the implementation of the new strategy.

C. Drug abuse control

71. Activities of organizations of the United Nations system should reflect the increased importance attached to drug abuse control by Member States at both the national and international levels.

72. The United Nations has a unique leading role in meeting the pressing requirement for a co-ordinated international response to drug abuse control in all its aspects. To this end, still greater co-ordination of United Nations organizations is required at the headquarters and country levels, in order to promote better complementarity and avoid overlap and duplication of efforts.

73. While mechanisms for co-ordination on drug abuse control already exist within ACC, particularly in its ad hoc inter-agency meetings, there is scope for them to be strengthened in order to carry out the mandates conferred upon the system, most recently by the 1987 International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. The objectives should be to promote closer co-operation with a view to achieving greater effectiveness.

74. In this context, the Joint Meetings reconfirmed the need to enhance co-ordination in drug abuse control so as to achieve a balanced approach in addressing, inter alia, the following aspects:

(a) Prevention and reduction of demand;

(b) Control of supply;

(c) Suppression of illicit trafficking;

(d) Treatment and rehabilitation.

75. The appropriate intergovernmental bodies should consider a system-wide plan of action prepared by ACC leading to specific activities to be carried out by organizations of the United Nations system, individually and collectively. Such a plan of action would aim at the full implementation of all existing mandates and subsequent decisions which may be taken by appropriate intergovernmental bodies, particularly at the proposed special session of the General Assembly on the issue of drug abuse control.

76. Should the General Assembly decide to hold a special session, organizations of the United Nations system should work closely together in preparing for it; the

preparations should include a report on current activities in the field of drug abuse control.

77. The appropriate intergovernmental bodies could consider whether the establishment of additional mechanisms for advising on the enhancement of the effectiveness of the United Nations system in the field of drug abuse control is required.

78. While the extent of resources is not the sole consideration, there is need both for optimal utilization of existing resources and for additional resources, including extrabudgetary resources.

79. Organizations of the system should enhance the sharing of experience at regional and international levels, and should improve the collection and dissemination of information on the activities of the United Nations system, including organizational arrangements and the resources involved, in the area of drug abuse control. Increased efforts should be directed towards enhancing public awareness, education and mobilizing public support.

80. There is need for an improved and more focused annual report by the Secretary-General on international drug abuse control, reflecting the activities of the system in the implementation of relevant intergovernmental decisions, including the various recommendations of the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control; there is also need for an appropriate version of the report to be made available to the public.

81. Further action would be required by organizations of the system to implement decisions taken by the ACC concerning:

(a) Formulation of more action-oriented programmes;

(b) Systematic exchange of information on all planned meetings to avoid conflict, maximize utilization of resources and, where possible, encourage joint programming;

(c) Establishment of a clear focal point in appropriate organizations of the system that do not yet have one;

(d) Research aimed at identifying links between drug abuse and rapid social change (perhaps on a regional basis) and at formulating guidelines for improved drug-abuse-related criminal policies, which take into account not only the potential but also the limits of the criminal justice system;

(e) Updated and expanded research on preventative audio-visual campaigns against drug abuse;

(f) A cumulative and annotated bibliography of all relevant publications within the United Nations system;

(g) Attendance at the ad hoc inter-agency meetings on co-ordination in matters of international drug abuse control: because of the close interrelationship between drugs and development problems and prospects in developing countries, all funding institutions within the United Nations system should attend these ad hoc inter-agency meetings. The presence of the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank is considered especially important.